

Thank you for your time this afternoon. I'm Dan Kirkbride, Representative for Wyoming State House District 4. Though I live more than a hundred miles from the nearest coal mine, I have constituents in five of the six towns in my district who gain a living from mining jobs in the Powder River Basin. My nearest neighbor, in fact, is a dynamite specialist at a mine. I think most all of us would agree that coal production is the backbone of energy generation in the United States. But at the micro level, I want to highlight two experiences from my own life this past week to emphasize the personal value of such a great resource. At an interim legislative committee meeting this past week in Lander, Wyoming, the electricity suddenly went out just after 5:00 p.m. The headline possibilities were mind-boggling. "Legislators Seek Answers in the Dark" being just one of them. But from a more basic viewpoint, we were all reminded of our great reliance on electricity and its benefits. As the twilight dimmed, I finally put down the bill we were assessing, entirely giving up on trying to read it. We all suffered in the weak light by candlelight. It was hot, and the lights came on just after -- came back on just after 9:00. But everyone attending had a few hours to reflect on all that we take for granted regarding reliable electricity, its comforts and our everyday dependence on it, reliable electricity generated in so many cases by coal. Also last week, an agile Internet provider climbed our roof and bolted on a new satellite dish, and we signed a contract for improved service and unlimited data up from our paltry former ten gigabytes. Oh, boy. Now we can catch up on all those missed "Longmire" episodes. But thinking back, I recall no caveat that the extra electricity we would soon require might not some day be available, nor did we consider that the service might become unaffordable owing to restrictions that rendered the go-to electrical generating resource unavailable in the ground or less an option. Rather, we both relied on a trustworthy system that has served for decades. Coal mining companies pay some of the highest taxes on any commodity in the world. They in turn gave us jobs for working families, electricity for the populous on a national scale, and taxes for county, state, and federal governments, and in the process reclaiming the land oftentimes to better than original condition. That is win-win and a whole lot more. As you review the leasing program, please consider continuing full

utilization of Wyoming's reserves by the coal industry with the added possibility of providing for an even more streamlined and transparent permitting process. Thank you.